



Tempe Public Art



R. Newton Mayall

Solar Time, 1979

Fabricated by
Artisan Industries Inc.
Donated by Olivia H. Birchett

Cast Bronze

Location:

6th Street Park
east of City Hall

Description: In August 1978, Olivia H. Birchett commissioned R. Newton Mayall, a sculpture artist from Boston, Mass., to fabricate a sundial to be mounted within “Plazita de Descanso,” (Little Plaza of Rest) a small outdoor park located at Sixth Street and Myrtle Avenue within the city of Tempe. This park was built in 1981 on land conveyed by Olivia Birchett. It was dedicated in memory of former Tempe Mayor Joseph Birchett in recognition of his many civic contributions. A plaque on the pedestal of the cast bronze sundial reads, “RELOJ DEL SOL (Sundial) – In Memory of Joseph A. Birchett.” Plazita de Descanso was later deeded to the city of Tempe, and an additional plaque was placed in the public park to recognize the generosity and civic contributions of Joseph A. Birchett. In 1995, the City of Tempe moved the sundial into its current location due to the redevelopment of the Mill Avenue Downtown District. Three new artists, Steve Martino, Michael Maglich, and John Chonka were awarded a contract by the City of Tempe to redesign the park and fabricate a base for the sundial in its new location.

Artist Biography: R. Newton Mayall lived and worked in Boston, Massachusetts. He was a civil engineer who had a profound interest in astronomy and sundials, authoring many books on the subject and designing several sundials. Mayall collaborated often with his wife, Margaret Walton Mayall. Both were members of the American Association of Variable Star Observers. Mr. Mayall passed away in 1989 at the age of 85.

Funding: The bronze sculpture was donated by Olivia H. Birchett, with other aspects of the project funded through the City of Tempe Municipal Arts Fund with the support of the Tempe Municipal Arts Commission.